

Education for Special Populations

Mission

To provide specific educational services to students with disabilities and students who are hospitalized, neglected, delinquent, and/or homeless, to give them the best possible opportunities to live, learn, work, and play in their communities.

Summary of Activities

Education services for special populations are provided by the state in two ways: through additional funding to local school corporations, and through the maintenance of special residential facilities.

State tuition support grants from the **Department of Education** (DOE) provide the bulk of state special education funding, through a formula that generates dollars based on the nature of each student's disability. The state also pays the full cost of educating special education children who cannot be served in a school environment, and provides funding to defray a portion of additional special education transportation costs. Special education and human services programs are coordinated to provide wrap-around services to connect children to medical, social, and mental health services in their local communities.



Federal funds provide for the administration of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Federal funds are also provided for educational support to the children of migrant workers, and to homeless, neglected, and delinquent youth. At the local level, all of these dollars are used to provide a range of services to children, including audiological services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and school health service. Such services supplement regular classroom instruction.

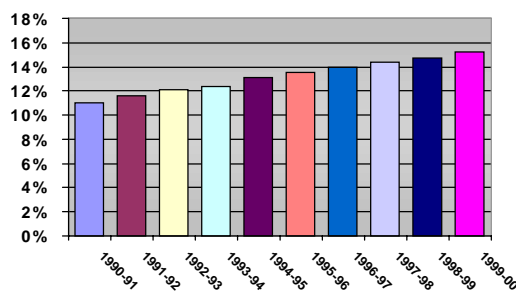
Indiana maintains a **School for the Deaf** and a **School for the Blind**; both are full-service residential facilities located in Indianapolis. Of the approximately 1,000 blind or visually impaired students in Indiana, the School for the Blind provides on-campus services to 200 students and outreach programs to another 120 students. Both schools also provide outreach services to local school corporations to assist in educating other students with disabilities related to vision and audiology. The **Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home**, located in Knightstown, provides residential education to children who are at-risk due to social, academic, or emotional problems, including children living in unstable home environments and children who have exhibited behaviors which have prevented them from receiving appropriate education in their school systems.

External Factors

Both the number of students and the percentage of students identified as needing special education services has risen steadily over the last ten years, requiring increased levels of funding. Federal mandates can dictate the type and amount of services that must be provided, while the ever-evolving needs of students with disabilities present another set of challenges.

New brain research, new teaching methodologies, and new instructional practice, including the mandate for alternative assessment systems, have driven change in serving students with special education needs.

**Percent of K-12 Students Identified as
Needing Special Education**



Evaluation and Accomplishments

The DOE has provided clear-cut procedures for providing the least restrictive educational environment for students with disabilities by utilizing wrap-around services available to children in their local communities. This has allowed schools to serve more children more appropriately and closer to home, while creating an infrastructure for enhanced services. This is evidenced by the 1998-1999 Special Education Post-School Follow-up Study, in which 77.7% of the respondents who had received special education services were employed four years after graduation. Indiana is also participating in a nationwide comprehensive study of special education spending. The DOE will be able to determine average special education and general education expenditures per student receiving special education, demonstrating how those expenditures vary by type of student, school, placement, and district.



The School for the Deaf has participated in the establishment of the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) Act, the Deaf-Blind Project, and partnered with the DOE Division of Special Education to provide distance learning parent workshops. 91% of School for the Blind students passed both sections of the ISTEP+ graduation exam, well above the state average. 53% of 2000 School for the Blind graduates were college-bound, while 20% were projected to attend technical schools, and 27% planned on entering the workforce.

Plans for the Biennium

The DOE will fully implement, as required by IDEA, alternate assessments for students with disabilities for whom ISTEP+ is not appropriate. The assessment measures students' skills along a continuum, from basic self-care through Indiana's K-12 Academic Standards. Individualized education programs (IEPs) will be developed for all students who qualify for special education services. An IEP identifies the student's disability and needs, describes annual goals to address those needs, and identifies the services to be provided to help the student achieve the goals. The DOE provides model IEP forms, as well as guidelines for developing IEPs, to local schools to help ensure that all students are exposed to academic standards that will best serve them when they leave their K - 12 educational experiences to live, learn, and work in their local communities.

